

Members:

Rep. William Bailey, Chairperson
Rep. Rolland Webber
Rep. Robert Alderman
Rep. James Atterholt
Sen. Thomas Wyss
Sen. Allen Paul
Sen. William Alexa
Sen. Allie Craycraft



Lay Members:

Terry Smith
John Dahman
James Brown
David Miller

LSA Staff:

Timothy Tyler, Attorney for the Commission
Mark Bucherl, Fiscal Analyst for the Commission

Authority: IC 2-5-20

MILITARY AND VETERANS AFFAIRS COMMISSION

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MEETING MINUTES

Meeting Date: August 18, 1998
Meeting Time: 1:00 P.M.
Meeting Place: State House, 200 W. Washington St.,
Room 156-B
Meeting City: Indianapolis, Indiana
Meeting Number: 3

Members Present: Rep. William Bailey, Chairperson; Rep. Rolland Webber; Rep. Robert Alderman; Rep. James Atterholt; Sen. Thomas Wyss; Sen. Allie Craycraft; Terry Smith; John Dahman; David Miller.

Members Absent: Sen. Allen Paul; Sen. William Alexa; James Brown.

Representative Bailey, Chairperson of the Military and Veterans Affairs Commission (MVAC), called the meeting to order at 1:06 P.M.

Representative Bailey said the first topic to be discussed would be the Indiana National Guard tuition reimbursement program. Brigadier General George Buskirk, Assistant Adjutant General (Army) of the Indiana National Guard, stated he was scheduled to have a meeting in the Governor's office at 3:00 P.M. today (August 18, 1998) concerning creating and funding this program.

Representative Bailey said that the MVAC would not be holding any additional meetings during the 1998 interim but felt the MVAC should go on record as supporting the reimbursement program. He said this support would be with the knowledge that the details of any necessary legislation would have to be worked out before the General Assembly returned in January 1999.

General Buskirk stated that he would provide MVAC staff with the details of his

meeting so they could be forwarded to MVAC members.

After a brief discussion, the members of the MVAC voted eight to nothing to demonstrate that the MVAC supported any legislation necessary to administer an Indiana National Guard tuition reimbursement program.

Representative Bailey stated that the next item to be discussed was House Bill 1409 from 1997 (HB 1409-1997) which provided a Desert Shield and Desert Storm bonus payment for members of the armed forces from Indiana. William Jackson, Director of the Indiana Department of Veterans' Affairs, stated that HB 1409-1997 only applied to a member of the armed forces who served after July 31, 1990, and before August 1, 1991, but a date establishing an official cessation of hostilities had never been declared.

Representative Bailey stated that he was aware of that issue but felt it was necessary to start with those dates to get a new Desert Shield and Desert Storm bonus bill moving through the process. Mr. Jackson said that he understood it would be easier to determine the fiscal impact of the bill if it included specific dates of service.

After a brief discussion, the members of the MVAC voted eight to nothing to have a new bill prepared for introduction during the 1999 session of the General Assembly based on HB 1409-1997 that would do the following:

- (1) Provide for a bonus to be paid to certain members of the armed forces of the United States who were residents of Indiana for at least six months immediately before the members' enlistment, induction, or call to active duty in the armed forces of the United States, were on active duty during Operation Desert Shield or Operation Desert Storm, and served after July 31, 1990, and before August 1, 1991.
- (2) Allow for certain surviving next of kin to receive the bonus if a member of the armed forces of the United States who is eligible to receive the bonus is deceased.
- (3) Specify that the amount of the bonus is \$300 for a member of the armed forces who qualifies, \$600 for a member of the armed forces who qualifies and was awarded a Purple Heart or received a disability rating of at least 10% because the person was injured while on active duty, and \$1,000 for the next of kin of a member of the armed forces who qualifies and was killed while on active duty.

Representative Bailey stated that the next item to be discussed was PD 3010 from 1999 concerning tuition exemptions for relatives of certain veterans at state-supported universities and colleges. After a brief discussion, the members of the MVAC voted eight to nothing to have a new bill prepared for introduction during the 1999 session of the General Assembly based on PD 3010 that would do the following:

- (1) Specify that the following persons are eligible to receive tuition exemptions as the relatives of veterans:
 - (A) A person who is a pupil at the Indiana Soldiers' and Sailors' Children's Home if the person was admitted to the Soldiers' and

Sailors' Children's Home because the person was related to a member of the armed forces of the United States.

(B) A person whose mother or father served in the armed forces of the United States if the mother or father received the Purple Heart decoration or was wounded as a result of enemy action and received any discharge or separation from the armed forces other than a dishonorable discharge.

(C) A person whose mother or father served before July 1, 1999, in the armed forces of the United States during any war or performed duty equally hazardous that was recognized by the award of a service or campaign medal of the United States if the mother or father suffered a service connected death or disability and received any discharge or separation from the armed forces other than a dishonorable discharge.

(2) Provide that a person may not receive a tuition exemption unless the person is eligible to pay the resident tuition rate at the college or university the person will attend as determined by the college or university and possesses the requisite academic qualifications.

(3) Provide that the tuition exemption is for 124 semester credit hours.

(4) Make it a Class A misdemeanor for a person to knowingly or intentionally submit a false or misleading application or other document to receive a tuition exemption.

Representative Bailey then stated the next item to be discussed was PD 3052 from 1999 that concerned property tax deductions for disabled veterans. Mr. Jackson stated that the current Indiana statute does not allow a veteran's disability to be evidenced by a certificate of eligibility issued by the Indiana Department of Veterans' Affairs so the veteran could qualify for a property tax deduction.

After a brief discussion, the members of the MVAC voted eight to nothing to have a new bill prepared for introduction during the 1999 session of the General Assembly based on PD 3052 that would allow a disabled veteran to qualify for certain property tax deductions if the veteran's disability is evidenced by a pension certificate, an award of compensation, or a disability compensation check issued by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs or a certificate of eligibility issued by the Indiana Department of Veterans' Affairs after the Indiana Department of Veterans' Affairs has determined that the veteran's disability qualifies the veteran to receive a deduction.

Representative Bailey then stated the next item to be discussed was a resolution regarding the display of the Prisoner of War/Missing in Action (POW/MIA) flag at state government buildings. After a brief discussion, the members of the MVAC voted eight to nothing to have a resolution prepared for introduction during the 1999 session of the General Assembly that would urge the State of Indiana to fly or display the POW/MIA flag on the grounds or in the lobbies of all Indiana state government buildings on Armed Forces Day, Memorial Day, Flag Day, and Independence Day.

Representative Bailey stated that the next item of business would be for the MVAC members present to sign copies of the letters to be sent to the members of Congress from Indiana urging full support of H.R. 3710, the "Charles Butler McVay and U.S.S.

Indianapolis Relief Act," introduced in the United States House of Representatives on April 22, 1998. Staff explained that the Personnel Subcommittee of the Legislative Council would have to approve the letter before it was actually forwarded to the members of Congress from Indiana.

The members of the MVAC present at the meeting then voted eight to nothing to urge all MVAC members to sign the letter.

After a brief discussion, the members of the MVAC voted eight to nothing to have a 1998 Final Report prepared that included a summary of the MVAC's work during the 1998 interim and all recommendations adopted by the MVAC.

Representative Bailey then asked if there was any further business to come before the MVAC. Mr. Jackson responded to questions from MVAC members by stating that construction had started on the veteran's cemetery in Madison, Indiana. He said that a bill that could provide federal funding for the cemetery had passed the United States House of Representatives and had been sent to the United States Senate. Mr. Jackson also stated that construction would not be completed until July or August of 1999.

Representative Bailey stated that, once the construction of the cemetery was completed and it was in operation, it would be necessary to include funding in the state budget for the maintenance of the cemetery.

Representative Bailey adjourned the meeting at 1:34 P.M.